

National Catholic Theater Conference

PRODUCTION CALENDAR

Vol. 3

November 1943

No. 2

In This Issue:

SISTER MARY PETER, O.P., PRESIDENT

THE SEQUEL TO "THEATER FOR VICTORY WEEK"

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

NEW, OR PRACTICALLY NEW

THIS THING CALLED TRUTH

PUBLISHERS' ITEMS

FOR PLAYWRIGHTERS

CROSS-COUNTRY LINEUP-NOVEMBER

The Sequel to "Theater for Victory Week"

On October 9 in Cleveland the Theater for Victory Council voted to dissolve its organization and to postpone indefinitely a Theater for Victory Week.

The Action was perhaps foreseen in the termination of the Educational Services Division of O.W.I., for one of the chief purposes in forming TVC was to provide a channel for the release of dramatic material prepared and published under the Office of War Information.

Another prime factor in TVC's dissolution was the lack of financial backing to set up organization headquarters through which information from representative organizations in non-commercial theater could be made available and exchanged. A budget of \$7500 was believed necessary; the money could not be raised by groups participating in TVC nor could it be secured without solicitation that involved greater expenditure of time than the representatives at Cleveland could offer. TVC, therefore, was disbanded.

What remains? -- the same willingness among the individual organizations to

(Cont. p.2)

PRESIDENT OF ROSARY

Sister Mary Peter, O.P., an active NCTC member from the outset, is now President of Rosary College, River Forest, Illinois. To Sister and to Rosary our warmest congratulations. The same ability that has won for her the post of commander-in-chief at Rosary has earned many admirers in the dramatic field to which she formerly devoted her exceptional talents.

To the Conference Sister Mary Peter has contributed sound advice, as a member of its official staff in the past and more recently in her service as a member of the last Nominating Committee.

Whatever her duties we know that her high standards of play selection and play production will continue to have their influence at Rosary.

FOR PLAYWRIGHTERS

Short of holding our own play writing contest, we like best to tell you of others. Watch the Calendar for notices of competition, and if you hear of one we have missed, please tell us about it. December's issue will cover awards of Dramatists Alliance and Charles Sergel Play Writing Contest.

THIS THING CALLED TRUTH

The Tidings, issue of September 17, includes an article by Emmet Lavery, "Confessions of a Realist, or This Thing Called Truth". A challenge to straight thinking, it takes us back in a Jack Robinson to the most vital discussion period of our 1941 Convention, "What is Catholic Theatre? What is its scope?"

If you have definite opinions of what constitutes Catholic theatre, what subjects it cannot treat, once again we urge you to participate in the roundup of opinion fostered by the Mid-West's Play Reading Committee.

DEFENSE WORKERS' ENTERTAINMENT

Were you listening to your radio early enough one recent Sunday morning to hear Courtenay Savage's script dramatizing the important role of recreation for defense workers?

NEW, OR PRACTICALLY NEW

Felix Doherty, when renewing his Conference membership, took time out to recommend some unused plays. He directs the spot-light to Padraic Pearse's works, especially "The Singer", remarkable for "its fresh Catholic spirit and unhackneyed technique that should delight any truly cultured audience."

Mr. Doherty also asks why the neglect of T. C. Murray's "Autumn Fire", which presents with punch and bite the triangle theme from a Catholic angle.

- - - - -

Last spring in Minneapolis a city-wide Catholic School War Demonstration took the stage. For the occasion Sister Charitas of the Academy of the Holy Angels wrote her own "Pageant for Peace", combining a patriotic and religious theme, that called for 160 high school students.

If you are looking for an all - school production providing for cooperation among art, dancing, music and physical education classes, write to Sister Charitas. Sister has promised generously to place her experience at the service of others.

- - - - -

For the directors who like elbow room for imagination, we recommend "Doodle Dandy, U.S.A.". Yes, some dance, some music, some costumes - but nothing elaborate necessarily if the production have spontaneity. With a professional company in New York last year it proved to be one of the few thesis plays children and adults enjoy. Some high school groups would find production too difficult, but don't discard it hastily. Conference unit members are entitled to \$2.50 reduction on a \$10. royalty.

- - - - -

George Jean Nathan's commentary on the closing of "Star Dust" while on the road is of interest to Conference friends of Walter Kerr and of the original "Art and Prudence." Mr. Nathan hopes that if the producer brings the play to New York, he will use the original script written by Walter Kerr not the "on the road" version.

Mr. Kerr nowadays is teaching the Army by day, and carrying forward the dramatic schedule at CU by night. And Washington by the way, can't get enough CU entertainment.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The past month's correspondence includes an enthusiastic letter from Sister Miriam of the School of the Brown County Ursulines, Saint Martin, Ohio, who has devoted summers to graduate study at Catholic University, and winters to dramatic practice at Saint Martin. Undoubtedly the claim that students' cultural development and character building can be traced to their play-making experience would depend for its proof on the play material used. That Sister Miriam has chosen well is borne out by the list of past and intended productions. Here are some of them:

Henri Gheon's "Journey of the Three Kings" (Sister adds, "Nothing we have done has been more fascinating, more enchanting"); other worthwhile Christmas plays, Florence Converse's "The Blessed Birthday", a pantomime and verse choir arrangement of "The Jongleur"; "Rachel, the Leper Maid", a manuscript play; Robert Hugh Benson's Nativity Play; an original "The Prince of Peace".

Also in the successful column, Tolstoi's "What Men Live By"; Lady Gregory's "The Traveling Man"; Edna St. Vincent Millay's "The Princess Marries the Page", and seven of Rose Fyleman's children's plays (Sister includes here the note "the secondary school does not find them childish but gives sympathetic and delightfully whimsical interpretations").

At present her group is working on Louise Saunders' "The Knave of Hearts", and Magdalene Kessie's "Summons of Sarel"; for Christmas there will be three episodes from Father Talbot's "Shining in Darkness".

And as a postscript, Sister adds Paul Vincent Carroll's "Saint Francis of Assisi" and an old Gaelic revival, "The Sea Foam Maiden", remarkable for their quaint flavor.

We are proud to number Sister Miriam's group among the Unit Members of the Conference.

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS FROM CHARLES COSTELLO

Is yours a formidable group? Has it passed beyond the experimental stage and become a permanent and well organized theatre group? If so, you will want to lend a hand to others who are now passing through the stages you were once in. Father Robert E. O'Kane, S.T.L., Moderator of the Catholic Theatre Guild, Richmond, has proposed for our consideration that the more mature NCTC groups assist the uninitiated High School groups in a practical way by taking on voluntarily the supervision of direction, make-up, lighting and costuming (rentals if possible) of High School productions.

How to offer this service in a practical way for a nominal fee, is the problem.

The Chair will recognize any practical solutions to this problem that may be offered.

High School groups that need and want help are urged to write us, stating:

- 1) Their biggest problem; this should be stated as specifically and clearly as possible.
- 2) Whether or not they are willing to pay a nominal fee to obtain help.

Mature groups able and willing to furnish such aid are asked to notify this office of the number of persons in their groups who might be available for any of these assignments. They also are asked to state the nominal fee these persons are willing to accept for this kind of service.

The purpose of the fee, Father O'Kane tells us is "mostly to cover expense and not to enter the professional class."

SEQUEL TO TV WEEK

(Cont. from p. 1)

work together, to tackle common problems, to contribute to the war effort through theatre, all undoubtedly strengthened by a taste of cooperation. For the time being, no central organization, and no Theatre for Victory Week this November.

Have you insured the receipt of your December Production Calendar by payment of your membership dues?

PUBLISHERS' ITEMS

Just completed are arrangements with Dramatic Publishing Co., Chicago, for release at a reduced royalty to our producing group members of two new plays: "The Great Big Doorstep" and "Nine Girls."

The first calls for 7 f, 5 m, one exterior (Louisiana).

After reading Dramatic Publishing's revised version of the past season's Broadway comedy, Rev. Leo L. Ward, CSC, Notre Dame wrote: "In making it more suitable for general use in schools, the authors seem to have lost very little if any, of the original vitality of the play...I like the play very much. it has a steady dramatic growth, a definite fullness in the characterization, and a fine warm human quality that is at once substantial and delightful. I can think of no objection that would not be specious." Authors of "The Great Big Doorstep" are Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett.

"Nine Girls," a typical Al Woods show when it appeared in NY early this year and altogether objectionable according to Mrs. Wyatt, has had its face lifted by the Chicago publishers. Now Mr. Costello describes the murder mystery as a "strong play" with definite theatrical effectiveness." Its all-girl cast makes a bid for consideration.

As with other titles now on our royalty reduction list, group members desiring to produce these plays must notify us of their intent, that we in turn may certify to the publisher their active membership in NCTC; royalty payments to be made to the publisher at least 30 days before performance.

- - - - -

"Junior Miss" is not yet available. Please do not write the publisher. As soon as it is released we'll tell you.

- - - - -

"There Shall Be No Night," the revised version with scene transferred to Greece, is now available through Dramatists Play Service. Royalty: \$35 1st performance; \$25 each subsequent showing; copies 75¢.

- - - - -

CROSS-COUNTRY LINEUP-NOVEMBER

Detroit - Catholic Theater's opening production: "The Willow and I" by John Patrick in a first Detroit showing at The Players Theater. November 14 through 21.

Dubuque - A favorite Barrie, "Dear Brutus," is Loras College's second offering of the season. Sunday evening, November 21, is the date.

Minneapolis - At Academy of the Holy Angels on November 7, "Jessica's Journey," a three act comedy, production of the Sophomore Class.

To celebrate the anniversary of the establishment of their order on November 22, 12 episodes in the life of Mother St. John Fontbonne, founder of the Sisters of St. Joseph, dramatized with narrators to connect the scenes.

Philadelphia - The Bar Association of Eden Hall, Torresdale, chooses "The Ghost of Rhodes Manor" for November production.

New York - "Career Angel" ushers in Blackfriars' new season and holds the stage from November 21 through December 5.

Davenport - "Nine Girls," a murder mystery, is Marycrest's selection to open the 43-44 season. An all-girl production from scene building to acting, for Marycrest has lost its former collaborators of St. Ambrose to the Navy V-12 program.

Though extra curricular dramatic activities have been curtailed at St. Ambrose, students have inaugurated an informal series of entertainments for the regular recreation period.

- - - - -

If you are in the Dubuque area you will want to save December 5 for the lecture at Loras to be given by Henry C. Wolfe, first hand authority on the Axis.

- - - - -

Sister Honora, O.P., of St. Catharine's High School Players, Racine, writes that she likes "Ever Since Eve," one of the recent additions to our royalty-reduced list, "because the youngsters' relationships both to home and school are pleasant and understanding," a rarity in adolescent plays.

